problems of beedi workers in the country;

(b) when the minimum wages for beedi workers in the Allahabad region were last revised; and

(c) by when Government propose to revise the minimum wages for the beedi workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A SANGMA): (a) Meetings of Central Advisory Committee constituted under Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976 and the Tripartite Committee to review the working of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 were held on 3rd January, 1986.

(b) and (c) Fixation of the minimum wages for the beedi workers falls in *State* sphere. As such the requisite information is not available with the Central Government.

Fall in Prices of Natural Rubber

140. SHRI N. E. BALRAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of natural rubber has recently fallen very steeply;

(b) if so, to what extent; and

(c) what measures have been taken by the State Trading Corporation to hold the price at remunerative level?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) and (b) Rubber prices, of RMA—IV grade, came down from Rs. 16,000/- per metric tonne on 16-9-1986 to Rs. 15,750 per metric tonne on the 16-10-1986 and have moved upto Rs. 15,850 on 24-10-1986.

(c) STC have undertaken price support operations as envisaged in the Buffer Stocking Scheme. Four depots at Cochin, Kottayam, Calicut and Trivandrum have been opened and purchase of RMA—IV and RMA—V through Kerala State Coop. Rubber Marketing Federation and Kerala State Warehousing Corporation, at the notified prices, have been organised by STC.

Procurement of natural rubber by STC from Kerala

141. SHRI N. E. BALRAM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Trading Corporation has started procurement of natural rubber from Kerala; and

(b) if so, what is the target and per unit price of procurement and the quantity of natural rubber procured so far?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) STC has been authorised to procure natural rubber of RMA—IV and RMA—V grades at the unit price of Rs. 16,000/- and Rs. 15,500/- PMT respectively. No quantity restriction has been placed on STC purchases. upto 28th October '86, 800 MTS have been procured.

Cut in Government Expenditure

142. SHRI N. E. BALRAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to effect cut on Government expenditure; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) It is a continuing process for the Government to initiate measures to curb inessential and non-productive expenditure. No formal instructions have however issued during the current financial year for effecting cut in the non-Plan and Plan expenditure voted by Parliament for the year 1986-87.